

# NHS Premises Security Alert and Guidance

8 September 2016

## This alert applies to ALL:

- ✓ Community Pharmacies
- ✓ Medical (GP) services
- ✓ Out of Hours providers
- ✓ Dental practices
- ✓ Ophthalmic Practices
- ✓ NHS Trusts
- ✓ Community Trusts
- ✓ Hospices
- ✓ Prisons

This follows burglaries or thefts from many of the above. Examples include burglary / theft of Controlled drugs or prescription forms from NHS Trust theatres, emergency stores, wards and A&E departments; burglaries from Pharmacies, Medical and Dental practices resulting in the theft of medicines and prescriptions, including controlled drugs.

We especially note that more recently there have been a number of burglaries of community Pharmacies, primarily across North Bolton. Each of these break-ins has resulted in the loss of scheduled controlled drugs from within the CD cabinet, and in one case the theft of the entire CD cabinet. Drugs liable to abuse are also stolen from the dispensary shelves i.e. diazepam, pregabalin etc.

## Risks

These losses of controlled drugs represent a significant risk to the public and that this risk is not limited to the traditional drug using community. Minors may be considered to be at greater risk of serious harm due to naivety and their lack of experience. We note that stolen controlled drugs will be pharmaceutical grade medicines compared to 'street drugs' which are typically cut resulting in only 10% or similar quantity. The risks of overdose harms and death are significant.

In one Community Pharmacy case, the alarm was triggered and the Police responded to a break in at about midnight. After the Police and the contractor had attended, the premises were secured as far as possible before the Police and the contractor retired from the scene. The burglars returned at approximately 4am to complete their activities including taking the entire CD cabinet with them.

Given the respective requirements of the Medicines Act 1968, The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the misuse of Drugs Regulation 2001 and the Health Act 2006, there will always be a requirement to demonstrate that safe systems are employed to protect and to secure controlled drugs, prescription forms and other controlled stationary.

This circular is intended to assist colleagues with their security arrangements. For further advice relating to security, please contact your organisations security manager, the local Police or the Controlled Drugs Liaison Officer.

## RECCOMENDATIONS

1. Please review your security procedures relevant to your specific type of premises. Please ensure that the basic systems are being followed
  - a. Locking / securing the premises
  - b. Keys including CD keys security
  - c. Controlled stationary (prescriptions / requisition forms etc.) are managed and tracked and securely locked away at all times when not in immediate use
  - d. Setting alarms, locking doors, security passes, key codes etc.
2. If you have CCTV installed, please make sure that this is operational and that clear images can be secured in the event of a burglary or theft.
3. Ensure that any alarm system is fully operational and functioning. You may wish to undertake a test with staff.
4. If your alarm system has managed external monitoring, please review your contract to ensure that all the relevant contact details and actions are correct and that the notifiable people clearly understand any actions to be taken.
5. **If your premises are burgled, please call the Police.** There is no indication of threat to staff called out to attend a theft or a burglary, but it is wise to first note any personal risks.
6. If your premises are burgled or a theft has occurred, please try not to touch any items, if this is not possible, please only try to touch items in as limited a manner as possible to avoid contaminating forensic evidence.
7. Notify managers / chain of command. Document what has occurred, the time that you are notified, what you have seen, etc.
8. If there is any obvious evidence i.e. blood from a cut to the burglar from a broken window, please do not touch this unless advised. This may be:
  - a. A biological risk
  - b. Valuable DNA evidence
9. Other notifications to be undertaken on the next working day
  - a. Contact (as appropriate) your organisations Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer (CDAO), Superintendent Pharmacist, Senior officer or manager
  - b. Contact your Police Controlled Drugs Liaison Officer (CDLO)
  - c. Contact the NHS England Area Team Contracts team (if you are a contractor)
  - d. Contact the NHS England Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer

### Contact Details:

Police Controlled Drugs Liaison Officer:  
NHS England CDAO:

Paul.Storey@merseyside.pnn.police.uk  
Dr Devina Halsall - 0113 825 2355